Remarks

By the foregoing, claims 1-19, 23 and 24 have been amended, claims 20-22 have been canceled, and claims 25-38 have been added. Accordingly, claims 1-19, 23-38 will be pending with entry of this amendment. Support for the amendments and new claims are found throughout the originally filed specification and claims, an English copy of which is filed herewith.

An action on the merits is now awaited. Should there be any questions the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the local exchange listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Sept. 4, 2001
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Please cancel claims 20-22 without prejudice or disclaimer and amend the remaining claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A porous composite matrix, **[in which the]** **comprising a** matrix **[is]** constructed from matrix formers comprising a hyaluronic acid derivative and a hydrolyzed collagen, and **wherein** the matrix formers are present in a weight ratio range of hyaluronic acid derivative to hydrolyzed collagen of 30:70 to 99:1.

2. (Amended) The composite matrix as claimed in claim 1, **[in which]** **wherein** the matrix formers are present in a weight ratio range of hyaluronic acid derivative to hydrolyzed collagen of 60:40 to 99:1**[, preferably in a weight ratio of approximately 70:30]**.

3. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in **[one of the preceding claims]** **claim 1**, **[in which]** **wherein** the hydrolyzed collagen is partially **[and/]**or completely hydrolyzed.

4. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in **[one of the preceding claims]** **claim 1**, **[in which]** **wherein** the hydrolyzed collagen is additionally derivatized and/or crosslinked.

5. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in **[one of the preceding claims]** **claim 1**, **[in which]** **wherein** the hyaluronic acid derivative is a hyaluronic acid ester.

6. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in claim 5, **[in which]** **wherein** the hyaluronic acid ester is an ethyl or benzyl ester of hyaluronic acid.

7. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in **[one of the preceding claims,]** **claim 1, further** comprising pores having an average diameter in the range of 10-1000 μm.

8. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in claim 7, **[in which]** **wherein** the pores have an average diameter in the range of 100-350 μm.

9. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in claim 7, **[in which]** **wherein** the pores have an average diameter in the range of 350-1000 μm.

10. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in claim 8, **[or 9, in which]** **further comprising** pores in the range of 10-100 μm **[are additionally present]**.

11. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in **[one of the preceding claims, which has]** **claim 1, further comprising** crosslinkages.

12. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed in **[one of the preceding claims,]** **claim 1, further** comprising biologically active compounds **[such as antibiotics, compounds for improving cell adhesion, calcium salts, inductive factors or further glycosaminoglycans and their derivatives]**.

13. (Amended) A composite matrix as claimed **[in one of the preceding claims,]** **claim 1, further** comprising chondrocytes, mesenchymal stem **cells, [and]** **mesenchymal** progenitor cells, osteoblasts **[or]** **and** connective tissue cells.

14. (Amended) A process for the production of a porous composite matrix as claimed in **[one of claims 1-13]** **claim 1**, comprising:

[the dissolution or suspension of the] **dissolving or suspending a** hyaluronic acid derivative and **[the]** **a** hydrolyzed collagen in a suitable first solvent **to form a solution or suspension**,

[the addition of] **adding** a pulverulent compound **to the solution or suspension, wherein the pulverulent compound** **[which]** is virtually insoluble in the first solvent, **and wherein the pulverulent compound** **[but which]** is soluble in a second solvent, in which the matrix formers hyaluronic acid derivative and hydrolyzed collagen are virtually insoluble, **[to the solution or suspension]**, **wherein** the pulverulent compound **[having]** **has** an average particle size distribution in the range of the desired pore size of the composite matrix to be produced,

[the removal of] **removing** the first solvent, and

[subsequently the dissolution of] **dissolving** the pulverulent compound in **[a]** **the** second solvent, in which the pulverulent compound dissolves and the matrix formers are virtually insoluble **to obtain said porous composite matrix**.

15. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 14, **[in which]** **wherein** the first solvent is 1,1,1,3,3,3-hexafluoro-isopropanol.

16. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 14, **[or 15, in which]** **wherein** the pulverulent compound is a water-soluble alkali metal or alkaline earth metal salt**[, in particular an alkali metal halide such as sodium chloride]**.

17. (Amended) The process as claimed in **[one of claims 14-16]** **claim 14**, **[in which]** **wherein** the second solvent is water.

18. (Amended) The process as claimed in **[one of claims 14-17]** **claim 14**, **[in which]** **wherein** the composite matrix is additionally shaped, dried and optionally sterilized.

19. (Amended) The process as claimed in **[one of claims 14-18]** **claim 14**, **[in which]** **wherein** the composite matrix is additionally **[optionally]** loaded with biologically active compounds and chondrocytes, mesenchymal stem and progenitor cells, osteoblasts or connective tissue cells.

23. (Amended) An implant, comprising a porous composite matrix as claimed in **[one of claims 1-13]** **claim 1**.

24. (Amended) A process for the production of an implant as claimed in claim 23, **comprising coating a porous composite matrix onto a surface of said implant, wherein said porous composite matrix comprises a matrix constructed from matrix formers comprising a hyaluronic acid derivative and a hydrolyzed collagen, and wherein the matrix formers are present in a weight ratio range of hyaluronic acid derivative to hydrolyzed collagen of 30:70 to 99:1** **[in which a porous composite matrix as claimed in one of claims 1-13 is coated onto the implant surface]**.